

Everything We've Seen

EldritchW

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Summary:

“If you’ve grown up in a horror town, it’s okay to be a nightmare person.”

Aka supernatural creepy shit still happens in Derry and Richie can still see... all of it.

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Author's Note:

Disclaimer: I've never read the book, only some wiki pages! So I only know some factoids here and there, which I will use or ignore randomly I'm afraid. And I only saw the movie once! Would love to see it again tbh can't wait for the DVD! Also, they're older bc I'm older :p

Each chapter is inspired by a song on the Apple Music "Hits of 1999" playlist lol

JUNE 1999

(baby one more time)

Richie wouldn't really mind not having to deal with this bullshit today, but his shitty family never decided to move out of this helltown, so instead he's having to watch a translucent ghost hand reach through the sink, accompanied with eery bell sounds. Why the fuck would a hand make bell sounds? Beats him. The hand appears to be covered in blood. The nails are caked in something. He spits out blood-stained toothpaste into the sink. He grumbles at the shivering hand as the blood stained water washes out into the sink, going straight through it. The more he doesn't give a shit, the more the hand becomes see-through and by the time he's put on his contacts it's not there at all.

See, if he went to the dentist he couldn't out-blood ghost hands during his bathroom routine. He wished he could share that one with Eddie. It's not like he couldn't take gum disease like a grown man, at 23 years old he had already bled from plenty of worse places. When

he had said that Eddie had almost imploded with annoyance, but that's what Richie lived for, really.

Eds had spent all of nursing school trying to make him a good health-conscious citizen, but Richie had always thought it was off-brand for him. He still had a few of the posters up in his kitchen. The one about condoms was a personal favorite. It had come in a care package, condoms included, as well as a sanctimonious letter about STDs. Richie had suspected that Eddie chickened out of calling like he usually did, not wanting to give him a legitimate opportunity to talk about his cock. Eddie was just thirty miles up in Bangor, going to the local community college, but he still acted like Richie was two steps away from dying of dysentery without his supervision.

Now that he finally was a registered nurse, Eddie was moving back to work at Derry's small hospital and probably dedicate more time to his long neglected favorite hobby: nagging Richie in person. Or that's what Richie was hoping for, if he was honest.

He couldn't really understand what he was feeling, thinking about his childhood best friend finally moving back to Derry after a whole degree of absence this very weekend. Sure, they had talked on the phone about the move constantly. They were moving in together, ostensibly to cut costs but Richie suspected (hoped?) that Eddie just felt like living together. Of course moving back in with his mother was out of the question, sharing an apartment just made sense. Eddie wasn't the type to live alone, he loved complaining too much. A goldfish wouldn't be enough of an outlet for Eddie's many rants. Richie thought he'd be much better at it. Well, from their phone conversations history, he knew he would. Richie had heard it all, a great deal about nursing, but also every single major and minor annoyance related to attending Eastern Maine Community College. Several of these had been Eddie's boyfriends, in fact a great deal of the major annoyances had been Closeted Boyfriends.

Once they had mostly made it all past puberty, it was always a known secret that Eddie liked guys instead of girls. As kids they didn't discuss it, and once Eddie had been away at college he had just started talking about who he was seeing without any semblance of an official coming out.

Mike did ask him about it once over a beer, about how long Richie had known. Hell, how long Eddie had known? Richie had no fucking idea. He had been kind of waiting for Eddie to blurt out something about it. Kind of hoping it would be the right time to say something about his own cock related adventures. Other people's cocks, not his own, as he had never needed a right time to talk about the latter. And once Closeted Boyfriends were publicly reviled, he never wanted to become someone else's, so he really he kept contacts with other people's cocks at a minimum.

And really with all the Things happening it had become much less of a concern. That's something else he hadn't shared with Eddie while he was in college. When he started seeing Things he had assumed it was a one-off. It kept happening but Mike never mentioned anything on his end. God knows that if creepy shit had been happening to Mike, he would've heard about it. After he got his job at the Library, it's like he had caught whatever nerd obsession Ben had in school. Whenever they met up, Richie tried to steer the conversation towards his alleged sexual prowess or how drunk he got last weekend but he inevitably had to sit through Creepy Local History lessons. It's almost like Mike was waiting for this stuff, looking for it. Richie knew each of the Losers had their own way of dealing with the summer of 89 and if Mike wanted to read all about past massacres he was welcome to it. Richie just wished that his own ways of coping could've stuck to drinking too much, instead of ghost slime flooding his apartment. Eddie sounded like he was dealing alright in Bangor, with no mention of anything out of the ordinary. Well, Richie wasn't sure how normal it was for a class of nursing students to have zero considerations for Health and Safety, but he got his info secondhand. Anyway, on the

phone to Eddie, he would complain about his manager's musical taste and how everyone in the office had small boobs while his feet were 10 inches deep in ghost slime. His policy was to happily ignore the fuck out of it. There was always a voice at the back of his mind, like a potty-mouthed version of Bill's, saying that none of this shit was real.

The Things always disappeared on their own eventually, so it all sorted itself really. No biggie. He wasn't about to end up in Juniper Hill for a few minutes of creepy looking apparitions. Not after spending a summer fighting off a killer clown. He could handle bathroom ghost hands. At least he didn't have to clean anything afterwards. Contrary to when he was a kid, none of the Things seemed to have a physical form, none had left any marks on the world after they disappeared.

He didn't look into the mirror before grabbing his bag and heading for the door. Mirrors were a classic rookie mistake, and he wasn't too eager to see whatever creepy shit was standing behind him this time. It was Saturday and like every Saturday he had to make it in to work in time for Derry's Saturday Afternoon POPtacular, only on DERRY FM. He was already not looking forward to whatever Madonna he was gonna have to play, so he didn't need any more Things than absolutely necessary. Afterwards, he had to go pick up Eddie from the train station. He hadn't seen him in a bit longer than a year now. Eds rarely came back to visit his mother, as their relationship had never fully recovered from his refusal to comply with her delusional medical treatments. He did apparently call her everyday, which made Richie wonder about how much time Eddie had spent on the phone during his degree.

His car sputtered before finally starting, the stereo playing ominous static with intermittent howling. It was actually off, but that never seemed to make any difference. All he could think about was long senior afternoons, a warm sun in the quarry, splashing water on open

books to get Eddie to tackle him. At that point it was just the both of them loitering. Mike worked for his grandpa after class and the rest of the Losers had made it out of Derry a long time ago. Bill would send letters that all three of them would gather around during lunch. Mike didn't have time for the quarry anymore, sticking to school and the library in his free time. Unlike Richie, he had his mind on a good college. Eddie usually went with Mike, but sometimes brought his books out to the quarry or the barrens and pretended to study until Richie could drag him away. A lot of Richie's high school memories are about trying to get Eddie's attention. Thankfully, Eds hadn't minded. Sometimes Richie likes to tell himself that he had liked it even, but then he remembers that he has enough delusions without adding Eddie into the mix.

He did spend his high school years deeply in love with the boy, content to be near him, to have him for himself. They weren't together, but Eddie wasn't with anyone else and neither was Richie. They never kissed, they never talked about their feelings but... they touched. Awkwardly held hands when no one could see, when the moment asked for it. Ruffled hair, an arm over the shoulder, sitting too close, falling asleep in the same bed "by accident". That was enough. Richie sighed as he pulled into the studio's parking lot. He had repeat to himself: that was enough. Now that Eddie had had other men showering him with attention, he didn't need his old childhood bud to hover anymore.

Fuck, Eddie had probably never noticed anything even back in high school. Richie wouldn't be surprised if it was all in his head, the heaviness of Eddie's hand in his. Maybe he had just dreamed up the whole thing, this closeness that had been so central to him. Eddie had been away for college for five years now, and Richie still felt like the last time he had an emotion was high school graduation. He cherished the memory of the smaller boy's cheek against his chest, the tickle of his hair under his chin. Eddie had hugged Mike right afterwards, and Richie could bet a week's salary that Mike wasn't carrying a torch for Eds five years later. It probably was all in his head.

Richie keeps spacing out during his whole shift, feeling like if he would just turn around he would see Eddie sunbathing behind him, reading *Prozac Nation*.

He's barely blinked once since waking up in the early afternoon but here is under the night sky, looking at Eddie's train pull into the station. He feels a faint panic raise through his veins, looking at the sea of disembarking heads. He caught a flash of red before Eddie was suddenly in front of him, a hand grasping his shoulder.

"Trashmouth Tozier!" Richie could swear that Eddie's broad smile was sparkling. "So you did remember to pick me up. I'm flattered." Richie felt himself move, almost automated, as he slung an arm around Eddie to direct him towards the parking lot, the other grabbing a suitcase.

"Eds my love, as if I would ever forget you." Eddie was still smiling as he protested the nickname, letting himself be pushed through the crowd. Richie felt his own heartbeat, wondering if Eddie could too. He didn't know why this felt so different to the weekends where Eddie had come down to visit. Was it because Mike wasn't here? Was it because after five years he had started to acknowledge how lonely he was when Eddie wasn't around? Richie found himself going back to his old high school tricks, refocusing his attention on Eddie's voice, away from whatever stupid emotion he was feeling. Thankfully, Eddie was prattling on about what happened during his graduation and was as usual, completely absorbed in his rant.

"...and then she wanted to be personally introduced to the dean and I had to tell her that it doesn't work like that! The woman is impossible, trying to stop her from doing anything is impossible and here I was listening to the TA to trying to convince my mother that..."

Richie was plotting the perfect your mom joke when he saw the Thing. About 10 feet away, the curtain was drawn on the station's photo booth. The flashing light that indicated the photos were being taken had caught his attention. The feet underneath the curtain were dangling, the booth's occupant too short to reach the floor, obviously a child. Richie's brow furrowed as he noticed that the legs were dripping wet, a pool of water already forming underneath the seat. He was just noticing that the person was missing a shoe when he registered the faint translucence. He straightened up as they passed the booth. Eddie was still talking a mile a minute, blissfully unaware of any ghost children. Richie could hear the sound of the photos being developed, but he knew that it wasn't real.

“...it was obviously extremely unsanitary but both my mother AND the dean had done it right before and everyone was looking at me, so I couldn't really back out of it!” Eddie's voice had climbed higher at the end of the sentence, the telltale sign that he was gonna whip himself into a frenzy if nobody interrupted him soon. That's my cue, thought Richie to himself.

it's not real

“Eds please, deep breaths.” Richie brought the smaller man closer in his one arm embrace. They were finally in view of his car. “I'm sooooo glad you survived shaking the dean's hand.”

“In a public toilet for fuck sake!” Eddie crossed both his arms, looking so petulant that Richie had flashbacks of multiple fanny-packs. He was fishing his car keys out of his pocket and Eddie leaned into the car's back doors. Both of Eddie's suitcases fit snuggly into the boot of his car.

“So you weren't lying. You actually got a functioning car? And they

allow you to drive it?

- Yeah it's real useful. Your mum can fit in the back seat!"

Eddie's disgusted frown still wrinkled his nose.

"Get in, loser." Richie finally felt a smile grow back on his face as he held the passenger door open. The contrast between Eddie's shining loafers and his dirty car floor was like a summary of their whole relationship. In that Eddie could walk all over him, he thought to himself.

As he turned the ignition, he was about to crack another joke when his car radio started up again with, surprise surprise, ominous static. It was gonna get more and more challenging not to react to the Things happening with Eddie right next to him, but fuck if he was about to betray himself. Eddie would probably diagnose him with fifteen different psychoses by Monday.

"No need to make that face, Eds" Richie was forcing his smile now. "I made sure there's no rats in here, just for you!"

"No it's not that, it's..."

It all happened at once and Richie later thanked the universe that they were only just pulling out of the station parking lot and not on the main road.

The radio suddenly emitted one of its usual Screeching Howls From Hell but as Richie just tightened his hold on the driving wheel, Eddie

jumped in his seat and screamed in terror, locking Richie's right arm in a death grip that almost sent them up the curb.

"WHAT THE FUCK? What the actual fuck Richie? Are you trying to fucking murder us? Why in the hell would you ever listen to this metal bullshit? Actually never mind, you can do whatever the fuck you want in your own stupid free time, but for god's sake don't play this shit when I'm in your car!" Eddie had gotten all red in the face and Richie would have found it hilarious if it hadn't been for the circumstances.

"You actually heard that?

- Of course I heard it! Do you think i'm fucking deaf? That wasn't funny, we almost crashed! You know what? Fuck you."

The static crackled through the speakers and Eddie turned around, his whole body radiating anger as he looked out the window. Richie was, for once, at lost for words.

Was it a fluke? Did he actually have a prank CD in there the whole time and just forgot about it? But no, he knew perfectly well there was no CD in there. Hell, the thing was actually fully disconnected. It's not like he loved having *Now That's What I Call Shrieking!* on loop in his car, so he'd tried a million times to silence it.

So Eddie could hear it. What did that mean for the Things? Could Eddie see Things as well? Were they real? Could they both be crazy?

if she's crazy then we're all crazy

By the time they parked in front of his apartment building, his

knuckles were white on the driving wheel. He got out of the car, careful not to look at Eddie as he unloaded the suitcases. He finally had his best friend back, but of course Richie Tozier couldn't manage half an hour without something ruining his life. He quickly decided that none of this had happened. None of that shit was real and maybe his condition was deteriorating. Of course, Eddie didn't hear Things, and that'd be the end of it.

Eddie stepped out, slamming the car door. Richie was about to sidestep him to get to the building but the smaller man grabbed his arm and forced him to turn around. He was still frowning, but Richie could detect concern beneath the irritation. Here goes, he thought, might as well start packing for Juniper Hill. At least Eddie would have the apartment for himself.

“Richie, what was that? This is the longest you've ever been silent, specially after one of your goddamn pranks.

- I was just daydreaming about your mom, sorry!

- Richie!”

Richie shrugged and Eddie let him go, throwing his arm up in the air.

“Heavens Richie just open the goddamn door, will you? I've already aged six years since you've picked me up I swear.

- What would that make you? 76?”

They made their way to the apartment, bickering non-stop, and Richie could feel his unease seep away slowly. He gave Eddie the two seconds tour, kitchen, bathroom, living room, bedroom.

The kitchen was “unacceptable! you really eat with a direct view of cartoon condoms? What the fuck Richie!”, the bathroom was “filthy. Who cleaned in here last? The builders?”, the living room was “drab”

and the bedroom made Eddie's eyebrows rise all the way up to his hairline.

"You sleep in a single? Why Tozier i'm surprised, I was expecting more from the famous womanizer.

- Why excuse me princess, I didn't know you were expecting the playboy mansion."

Eddie sat on the bed with a grimace.

"You're the one always boasting. Anyways, where am I supposed to sleep then?"

Richie took the desk chair, swiveled to face the bed.

"The couch unfolds into a double, for your majesty's convenience.

- So the living room is my bedroom? You expect me to go to sleep staring at a The Cure poster? I'm redecorating."

It was his turn to raise an amused eyebrow. Eddie was really cute when he blushed.

"Shut UP Richie oh my god. I wouldn't have to do it if you set up your flat like a normal human. I sent you those awareness posters three years ago, for your education not kitchen wall art!"

Richie was gonna interrupt Eddie's building interior design rant (ha) when the hand burst through the wall right next to Eddie's head. Still covered in blood and still utter bullshit, it looked like the same hand from the bathroom sink. Richie focused on Eddie's voice, ignoring the shit out of the apparition with what was now full blown spite.

But the whole arm shot out through wall and to his horror, clamped down across Eddie's throat. Eddie instantly started screaming, grasping at the arm, trying to set himself free. Richie toppled his chair to the ground, panicking into action. His heart sunk when his

hands closed down around the definitely material ghost arm, and he put his whole strength into pulling it off Eddie. Gasping for air, Eddie dived off the bed. The arm was convulsing in his grip and Richie let go, horrified. Both men stared as a second arm reached through the wall, the pair of hands spasming unnaturally.

“WHAT THE FUCK IS THAT?” Just as Eddie seemed to be regaining the ability to curse, both hands went rigid. With a snap, the right one suddenly slapped Richie across the face, hard. Stunned, he fell back off the bed, landing next to a screaming Eddie, who grasped at his face, his other hand about to rip a hole into Richie’s shirt. And just as they appeared, both arms faded into the wall.

“OH MY GOD!” Sure, Richie felt like he was freaking out, but he had learned a long time ago that it was nothing next to Eddie freaking out.

“Oh my fucking god?? Richie what the fuck was that? Richie oh my god, are you okay?”

Richie had just gotten slapped by a disembodied hand, but he was starting to be more flustered by how tenderly Eddie was holding his face and the panicked look of concern on the other man’s face.

Author's Note:

Hope that was alright! I decided to post it before I chickened out lol. I haven't written fic in years but I couldn't resist my favourite trope: cursed towns!